

Questions and Answers About National Pine Cone Recall

Q. When did the Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS) issue the national recall on pine cones from India?

A. On December 12, 2003, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) issued a national recall on pine cones originating in India. On December 5, 2003, PPQ issued a limited recall on affected pine cones from Target retail stores only. PPQ expanded the recall nationwide based on pest finds in additional retail chains.

Q. Which products are affected by the recall?

A. The recall is specific to pine cones of Indian origin. The pine cones are being sold either singly or in potpourri. The UPC numbers or SKU numbers for the affected products can be found on the APHIS Web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/sa_pinecones.html. Products bearing different UPC codes or SKU numbers currently are not affected by the recall.

Q. Which retailers are affected by the recall?

A. The recall applies to infested pine cones sold in Target, Wal-Mart, JoAnn Fabrics, Lowe's, Dollar Tree, Frank's Nursery, and K-mart stores nationwide.

Q. In which States were the infested pine cones found prior to issuance of the national recall?

A. PPQ intercepted infested pine cones in nine States: California, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

Q. Are the intercepted pests currently known to exist in the United States?

A. PPQ intercepted *Chlorophorus strobilicola* (Cerambycidae), a pest native to India. This pest is not known to exist in the United States. PPQ is planning a nationwide survey for this pest.

Q. What are the risks associated with this pest?

A. *Chlorophorus strobilicola* is a wood-boring beetle that feeds on pine cones and lowers seed production.

Q. How did APHIS discover the infested pine cones?

A. An APHIS employee discovered larvae in an infested pine cone in North Carolina at a Target store.

Q. What steps should consumers take if they previously purchased affected products?

A. Infested pine cones purchased either singly or in potpourri (bagged or boxed) should be double bagged, tied securely, and disposed of in the trash.

Q. What are the symptoms of infestation that store managers and consumers should look for?

A. Store managers and consumers concerned about possible infestation should check for exit holes in the cone, a sawdust-like material called frass or egg sacs in the crevices between the scales of the pine cones.

Q. How will the recalled items be handled?

A. The recalled pine cones will be incinerated or placed in a landfill. APHIS supervised treatment (i.e., fumigation with methyl bromide), may be an alternative depending on the packaging and state of the product.

Q. What steps are being taken by APHIS to prevent the introduction of these pests on newly imported products?

A. In addition to the national recall on infested pine cones, APHIS is requiring mandatory fumigation for all pine cones from India entering U.S. ports of entry. Products packaged in impermeable wrappers will be refused entry unless they are removed from the packaging to allow effective treatment.

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